



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

➤BOOK NOTICES.◀

SAYCE'S LECTURES ON THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS.*

No books are more welcome at this time to O. T. students than those discussing the religions of people akin to the Hebrews. Such is the one before us. It is the latest and the most exhaustive treatise in English of the Babylonian religion. Its author is numbered among the authorities on Assyriology, and while some may think his poetic fancy is at times too strong, no English scholar, certainly, stands higher in this department of learning. First, we have a good sketch of the immense difficulties attending the study of original Assyrian literature. He who succeeds here must be endowed with little less than genius in unraveling the mysteries of the past, and a spirit of heroism that shrinks from no painstaking task in gathering and deciphering bits of clay tablets, matching them together and seeing that not a single precious word is lost. In the results of this study here given, especially in the first lecture, we have a good insight into the views of Assyriologists upon Old Testament subjects. Some of the facts or theories presented will appear quite novel to the average Bible student. It is said, for example, that Sargon I., of Babylonia, reigned 3750 B. C., or 1400 years earlier than the date assigned to the flood in the margin of our English Bibles. The different lines of the proof of this fact are given; they will, however, scarcely satisfy all readers. Babylonian influence on Israel is shown to have been very great from the kinship between the people, and it is claimed that along the Euphrates rather than the Nile must be sought the religious antiquities of the Hebrew people. This, of course, thoroughly accords with incidental statements of Scripture. But few have thought of the ark and the table of shew bread and the lavers of the priests being of the temples of the old ancestral home. More striking, perhaps, is the derivation given to certain names. Moses is not of Egyptian origin from "mess" or "messu" son, as is quite popularly believed, but from the Assyrian "masu" hero. The name Joseph, also, probably was originally "asipu" *the god of the oracle*, and "long before the Israelitish house of Joseph took possession of Luz it had been the house of Joseph in another sense, and the sanctuary of a Canaanitish oracle." Likewise also to the Babylonian pantheon are we to look for the originals of the names of the three earliest kings of Israel, Saul, David, and Solomon. But not all of this volume is filled with such interesting references to the Old Testament, although many others are given. Its bulk is devoted to a description of the various deities of Babylonia and the explanation of their development and meaning. The lectures given to this will, perhaps, be found heavy and dull to those not especially interested in the science of religion. Yet they are replete with needed information, and are of great value in showing the wide gulf existing between the Semitic religion of the valley of the Euphrates and that of the Jordan. Without divine revelation such a difference could not have existed. Still, however, from the Assyrian Psalms we find that God's Spirit even there was working, and leading men, through penitence, into a higher and better spiritual life. These Psalms, together with hymns, litanies and magical texts, to the number of 100 pages, are given in the appendix,—a noteworthy collection, and increasing much the worth of this valuable volume.

*LECTURES ON THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF RELIGION AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS. By A. H. Sayce, Fellow and late Senior Tutor of Queen's College and Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology, Oxford; Hon. LL. D., Dublin. The Hibbert Lectures, 1887. 8vo, 558 pp. London: Williams & Norgate.